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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY



January 25, 2000

Magalie Roman Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12 Street, SW
Washington, DC

RE: CC Dockets 96-262, 94-1, 99-249, 96-45 Ex Parte

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Dear Ms. Roman-Salas:

On behalf of the National Association of Women Business Owners, I want to express support for the efforts of the Coalition for Affordable Local and Long Distance Service (CALLS) and its plan for interstate access and universal service reform. The proposal overhauls the complex system of hidden telephone subsidies that have kept long-distance telephone rates artificially high.

NAWBO is the only dues-based national organization representing the interests of women entrepreneurs in all types of businesses. We have more than 75 chapters across the United States.

One of our jobs is helping our members leverage technology for maximum benefit. Affordable and accessible telephone service is a big part of that in this expanding information economy. This is one reason the CALLS plan is attractive to us. Under the plan the PICC, Presubscribed Interexchange Carrier Charge, is eliminated and second line charges are reduced. This translates into savings for our members and benefits all small businesses.

And, although it seems almost impossible, several major telephone companies are working together. We want to applaud the six companies that came to the table -- AT&T, Bell Atlantic, BellSouth, GTE, SBC and Sprint. The fact that these companies recognized the need for access reform -- and compromise -- says quite a bit about the changing marketplace. We commend them for thinking ahead and proposing rules designed to stimulate growth and competition in the Internet age. As long as the FCC guarantees customers will benefit along with the companies, the plan can help move service into a competitive future.

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The CALLS proposal allows companies to plan as well. It suggests a scheduled cut in usage access charges every July for the next five years. This will set a real platform for competition, because the companies will be on a level and fixed playing field.

But the playing field must be fair for everyone, consumers and business. The companies must pass along the benefits of access charge reductions. In addition, a rigorous education campaign for small business and residential customers should be a part of the CALLS proposal. One of NAWBOs' Public Policy Council's jobs is to educate our members on advocacy issues. We do this on a daily basis, through our web site, seminars, newsletters and forums. With the marketplace changing as it is, we see continuing education as the only way to ensure that all consumers benefit by being on the right plan. We encourage the FCC and the CALLS members to make education as big a priority as access reform.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



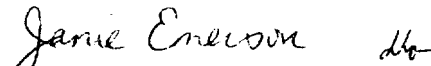
Delanea Ouellette
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Terry Ndese
National Public Policy Advisor



Annette Alvarez, Council Director
Southwest Region



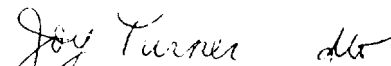
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